

11-15-00

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Express Mail Certificate No.: EK887307765US
Docket No.: MI14.406
Date: November 13, 2000

Box PATENT APPLICATION
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the original utility patent application of:

Inventor(s): **George Melkonian**
For: **MULTI-COMPONENT COEXTRUSION**

Enclosed are:


- ☒ 10 sheets of drawings, Figures 1 through 9.
- ☒ An assignment of the invention to: MikronWood, LLC
a limited liability company of the State of Nevada .
- ☐ An associate power of attorney.
- ☒ A Declaration and Power of Attorney
- ☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 37 C.F.R. 1.27
- ☒ The filing fee has been calculated as shown below.
- ☐ Filed without fee or formal papers.
- ☐ A Preliminary Amendment

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|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Basic Utility Fee | 1 | | | \$ 355.00 | or | \$ 710.00 |
| Total Claims | [19] | -20 | x \$9.00 = | \$ 0.00 | or x \$18.00 = | \$ 0.00 |
| Independent Claims | [3] | -3 | x \$40.00 = | \$ 0.00 | or x \$80.00 = | \$ 0.00 |
| Multiple Dependent Claims | [0] | 0 | x \$135.00 = | \$ 0.00 | or x \$270.00 = | \$ 0.00 |
| ASSIGNMENT(S) | [1] | 0 | x \$40.00 = | \$ 0.00 | or x \$40.00 = | \$ 40.00 |
| | | | TOTAL = | \$ 0.00 | or TOTAL = | \$ 750.00 |

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Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: George Melkonian
Filed: Concurrently Herewith
For: MULTI-COMPONENT COEXTRUSION

Docket No: MI14.406

Date: November 13, 2000

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, DC 20231

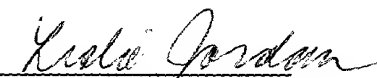
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Respectfully submitted,

RICHARDSON & FOLISE


Leslie Jordan

Enclosures: Form PTO 1082
Patent Application
Informal drawings (10 sheets of informal drawings, Figs. 1 to 9)
Declaration and Power of Attorney
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Title: MULTI-COMPONENT COEXTRUSION

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TECHNICAL FIELD

10 This invention relates to methods and apparatus for forming a multiple component, composite polymer/wood fiber extrusion and a method for making the same. More specifically, the invention relates to a composite extrusion of the type described above having a multiplicity of components, including a high density, substantially hollow extrusion profile having inner and/or
15 outer components having a different density coextruded with the high density component.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

20 Milled wood products have formed the foundation for the fenestration, decking and remodeling industries for many years. Historically, ponderosa pine, fir, red wood, cedar and other coniferous varieties of soft woods have been employed with respect to the manufacture of residential window frames, residential siding and outer
25 decking. Wood products of this type inherently possess the advantageous characteristics of high flexural modulus, good screw retention, easy workability (e.g., milling, cutting, paintability), and for many years, low cost. Conversely, wood products of this type have also suffered from poor weatherability in harsh climates, potential
30 insect infestation such as termites, and high thermal conductivity. In addition to these inherent disadvantages, virgin wood resources have become scarce, thus the raw material cost for milled wood products has become correspondingly expensive.
35

In response to the above described disadvantages of milled wood products, the fenestration industry, in particular, adopted polyvinyl chloride as a raw material

0 for the manufacture of hollow, lineal extrusions for
subsequent assembly into window frames. Window frames
manufactured from such lineal extrusions became an
enormous commercial success, particularly at the lower end
of the price spectrum. Window frames manufactured from
5 hollow, lineal polyvinyl chloride (PVC) extrusions
exhibited superior thermal conductivity, water absorption
resistance (and thus rot resistance), insect resistance,
and ultraviolet radiation resistance compared to painted
ponderosa pine. Although such extrusions further enjoyed
10 a significant cost advantage over comparable milled wood
products, these polymer based products had a significantly
lower flexural modulus (i.e., bending moment), were
difficult if not impossible to paint effectively, and had
a significantly higher coefficient of thermal expansion.
15 By the mid 1990s, a number of window and door frame
manufacturers attempted to combine the most desirable
characteristics of extruded thermoplastic polymers and
solid wood frame members by alloying PVC with wood fiber
in an extruded product.

20 U.S. Patent No. 5,486,553 to Deaner et al. discloses
an extruded polymer/wood fiber thermoplastic composite
structural member, suitable for use as a replacement for
a wood structural member, such as for window frame
components. The preferred thermoplastic component is
25 polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and the preferred wood fiber
component is sawdust. In a preferred embodiment of the
invention, a double hung window unit is disclosed having
cell, jamb and header portions comprising hollow, multi-
compartment lineal extrusions which can be made from the
30 disclosed thermoplastic polymer/wood fiber composite. The
resulting extrusion has mechanical properties which are
similar to wood, but have superior dimensional stability,
and resistance to rot and insect damage as compared to
conventional wood products.

35 Problems relating to co-extrusion of wood fibers and
a thermoplastic polymer component are well explained in

0 United States Patent No. 5,851,469 to Muller et al. issued
December 22, 1998, the disclosure of which is incorporated
herein by reference. Muller et al. described the typical
prior art steps for co-extruding a thermoplastic polymer
5 with wood fiber. In a first step, the wood fiber is dried
using conventional techniques to a moisture content of
less than 8% by weight. In a second step the wood fiber
and plastic material are preheated to a temperature of
approximately 176° F. to 320° F. In a third step, the
10 materials are mixed or kneaded at a temperature of 248° F.
to 482° F. to form a paste. In a fourth and final step,
the paste is either injection molded or extruded into a
final form. If the paste is extruded, the extrudate must
be calibrated and cooled. The Muller et al. reference
15 specifically addresses the problem of controlling the
temperature of the extrudate through various stages of the
extrusion process to prevent undesirable sheer stresses
from arising during the extrusion process. Muller et al.
also teach that a particular problem involved with wood
20 fiber/thermoplastic composite extrudates involves
volatiles in the wood component boiling off at extrusion
temperatures causing an undesirable foaming of the
extrudate.

In addition, extruded polymer/ wood thermoplastic
composite structural members allowed manufacturers to
25 limit the amount of expensive thermoplastic materials used
in the extrusion by increasing the percentage of low cost
waste wood product incorporated into the process.
Substantial advancements have been made in this art
whereas as of the filing date of this application,
30 concentrations of wood fiber in a hollow core,
thermoplastic extrusion up to 30 to 40 percent are known.
Unfortunately, adding significant quantities of wood fiber
to the thermoplastic polymer/wood fiber composite degrades
the flexural modulus (i.e., bending moment) of the
35 extrusion. Thus, manufacturers often resort to the use of
U-shaped metal channels which reside inside hollow

0 sections of the longitudinal extrusion to provide
increased stiffness, as well as angled metal members
incorporated into interior components of such structures
and corners thereof. The use of such additional
structural members disadvantageously increases the cost of
5 assembling products of this type, as well as decreases the
thermal efficiency of these products.

Some manufacturers have moved in a different
direction by preparing foamed lineal extrusions, with and
without a wood fiber content. Such extrusions address the
10 difficulties in connecting thin wall, hollow extrusions at
corners (typically done by thermal welding) by providing
a large surface area for joining. In addition, screw
retention and thermal efficiency may be substantially
improved in foamed extrusions of this type. Further yet,
15 foamed extrusions containing a high wood fiber content are
readily paintable and can be provided with a surface
texture which mimics solid wood. The assignee of the
present invention has developed improved techniques for
increasing the wood fiber content of such foamed
20 extrusions as disclosed in United States Patent
Application Serial No. 09/452,906, entitled "Wood Fiber
Polymer Composite Extrusion and Method", filed December 1,
1999, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by
reference. Unfortunately, while such foamed lineal
25 extrusions advantageously exhibit improved heat
deflection, Vicat softening point, screw retention, and
lower density (i.e., decreased raw material cost) as
opposed to rigid, hollow core PVC extrusions, foamed
extrudates typically have a lower flexural modulus than
30 comparable rigid, thin walled, hollow core PVC extrusions.

In an attempt to combine the specific structural
advantages of different types of polymers, at least one
manufacturer in the fenestration industry has attempted to
produce a multi-component extrusion having an extruded
35 foamed material as one component, flexible flanges as
another component, and a partial capstock as a third

0 component. An example of an extrusion of this type is disclosed in United States Patent No. 5,538,777 to Pauley et al. entitled "Triple Extruded Frame Profiles", issued July 23, 1996. That patent discloses a three- component
5 extrusion in cross-section is a polyvinyl chloride foam core, optionally including a fiber component. The core has a recess forming a U-shaped channel for receipt of glass panes. The panes are held in place by flexible flanges extending normal to the inside of the channel in
10 the form of a flexible material which is used to form the flexible flanges and/or seals. Dupont Alcryn™ is disclosed as an appropriate material for the flanges. The extrusion is also disclosed as having a partial capstock, preferably acrylic styrene acrylonitrile (ASA) which is
15 provided only on the portion of the exterior of the extrusion which will be exposed to weathering. Although this extrusion enjoys the low cost advantages of a foamed, thermoplastic/wood fiber core and the weatherability of a partial capstock, it is believed that an extrusion of this
20 type has insufficient flexural modulus for use in anything other than as a sash portion of a window assembly. That is, it is believed that metallic channel stiffeners, and the like, would still be necessary if this type of extrusion construction was employed as a main frame
25 element.

Thus, a need exists for a lineal extrusion for use in the fenestration, decking and remodeling industries which combines a low raw material cost with high tensile, compressive, bending moment, and impact strength; improved
30 weldability with respect to hollow core extrusions; high wood fiber content (reduced cost); and high workability (e.g., millable, paintable, and good screw retention). In addition, there is a need for an extrusion of the type described above which is highly durable, being resistant
35 to rot, mildew, and ultraviolet degradation.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a continuous, lineal multi-component polymer composite extrusion having low raw material cost; high tensile, compressive, bending moment, and impact strength; improved weldability with respect to hollow core extrusions; high wood fiber content; and high workability.

It is a further object of the present invention to achieve the above object by a method and apparatus which provides a continuous, lineal multi-component polymer composite extrusion which is highly durable, being resistant to rot, mildew, and ultraviolet degradation.

It is yet a further object of the invention to achieve the above objects with a manufacturing process capable of varying the ultimate macroscopic properties of the resulting extrudate so as to closely match the differing physical requirements of the fenestration, decking and siding markets.

The invention achieves the above objects and advantages, and other objects and advantages which will become apparent from the description which follows, by providing a multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion having a first, high density, thin wall composite member having a thermoplastic component and a cellulosic fiber component. The inventive extrusion further has a second, low density foamed member, consisting of a foamed, thermoplastic polymer coextruded with the first member in a plastic state, substantially contemporaneously with the first member, in an extrusion die so as to be laterally coextensive with, and molecularly bonded to, either an inside hollow portion of the first, thin wall high density member, an outside of the first, thin wall, high density member, or both.

In the preferred embodiment, the inventive extrusion may be capped with a thin layer of acrylic styrene acrylonitrile (ASA) or polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

0 In alternate embodiments of the invention, the low
density foamed member may include a substantial wood fiber
content, particularly when the second, low density foamed
member is on the outside of the first, thin wall, high
5 density composite member and a thermoplastic cap is not
employed. The thermoplastic cap may be provided with a
highly weatherable, thermoplastic polymer on one side of
the extrusion (to be exposed to the outdoor portion of a
building) and a highly paintable thermoplastic polymer on
10 an opposite side of the extrusion, to be exposed to an
indoor portion of the building.

The invention includes apparatus in the form of a
multi-plate extrusion die for manufacturing the above
extrusions, including an introductory plate for passage
therethrough of a primary extrudate from a principal
15 extruder, a mandrel plate downstream of the introductory
plate for receipt of the primary extrudate which will
become the first, thin wall, high density composite
member. The mandrel plate has suspended within an
aperture therein a first elongated mandrel wherein the
20 first mandrel is substantially hollow and has therein a
second mandrel substantially suspended therein in a spaced
apart relationship from the side walls of the first
elongated mandrel so as to form an elongated, hollow
interstitial void between the first and second mandrels.
25 The interstitial void is thus available for introduction
of the second, low density foamed material which can
become laterally coextensive with, and molecularly bonded
to, one of the inner side walls of the first member.
Finally, a secondary plate is positioned between the
30 introductory and mandrel plates so that in one alternate,
preferred embodiment of the invention the second, low
density foamed extrudate can be provided on the outer side
wall of the first, thin wall, high density composite
member so that foamed material can be provided on both the
35 inside and the outside of the thin wall extrusion, as well
as on the inside or the outside of the hollow core

0 extrusion exclusively. A capstock plate can be provided downstream of the mandrel plate for adding a third extrudate in the form of a capstock to the final extrudate. Elongated, tapered fins are preferably provided to support the first elongated mandrel with respect to the aperture in the mandrel and also to support the second mandrel in a spaced apart relationship with respect to inner side walls of the first hollow mandrel.

The invention includes a method of making the above described multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion with the above described introductory, mandrel, and secondary die plates which includes the steps of preparing a thermoplastic primary extrudate and a secondary thermoplastic extrudate, introducing the primary extrudate in a plastic state into the introductory plate, 10 positioning a mandrel plate downstream of the introductory plate, and introducing the secondary extrudate in a plastic state into a void between the first and second, coaxially spaced mandrels in the mandrel plate, so that an elongated final extrudate having at least two different 15 longitudinally continuous, molecularly bonded thermoplastic components exit the mandrel plate. 20

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is an environmental view of a first embodiment of a multi-component, polymer composite extrusion of the present invention. 25

Figure 2 is a exploded schematic representation of a plurality of extrusion die plates employed in the manufacture of the extrusion shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a left hand, environmental view of a mandrel plate die of the die shown in Figure 2. 30

Figure 4a is a right hand perspective view of the mandrel plate die shown in Figure 3.

Figure 4b is a left hand perspective view of a floating mandrel of the mandrel die shown in Figure 4a. 35

0 Figure 4c is a right hand perspective view of the floating mandrel shown in the mandrel die of Figure 4a.

 Figure 5 is a schematic representation of a polymer flow in a plastic state in the die assembly shown in Figure 2.

5 Figure 6 is an environmental view of a second embodiment of a multi-component, polymer composite extrusion of the present invention.

 Figure 7a is a right hand, perspective view of a mandrel plate having a dual floating mandrel therein for manufacture of the extrudate shown in Figure 6 in conjunction with some of the die plates shown in the die plate assembly of Figure 2.

10 Figure 7b is a left hand environmental view of a mandrel plate having a dual floating mandrel therein for manufacture of the extrudate shown in Figure 6 in conjunction with some of the die plates shown in the die plate assembly of Figure 2.

 Figure 8a is an enlarged, right hand perspective view of the dual floating mandrel shown in Figure 7a.

15 Figure 8b is a left hand perspective view of the dual floating mandrel shown in corresponding Figure 7b.

 Figure 9 is a schematic representation of a third alternate embodiment of the invention.

25 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

 A first preferred embodiment of a multi-component, composite polymer/wood fiber continuous lineal extrusion of the present invention is generally indicated at reference numeral 10 of Figure 1. The extrusion includes a first, high density, thin wall component 12, having an inner side wall 14 defining at least one hollow section in profile. The multi-component extrusion 10 further has a second, low density foamed thermoplastic member 16 which is coextruded with, and substantially fills, the hollow section defined by inner side wall 14. As will be

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0 described in further detail hereinbelow, the second
component 16 is preferably formed of a foamed
thermoplastic member which is molecularly bonded to, and
substantially laterally coextensive with, the inner
sidewall 14. In this preferred embodiment, the first
5 component 12 has an outer side wall 18 defining the
exterior surface of the first component. In this first
preferred embodiment, the outer side wall 18 supports a
thermoplastic cap 20 which is substantially coextruded
with the first and second components 12, 14, so as to be
10 molecularly bonded to the outer side wall 18. The
thermoplastic cap is preferably formed from a highly
weatherable, thermoplastic polymer such as polyvinyl
chloride (PVC).

The multi-component, composite polymer/wood fiber
15 extrusion 10 shown in Figure 1 is suitable for use as
vertical and horizontal members of a window sash. The
extrusion defines a substantially U-shaped channel,
generally indicated at reference numeral 22, for the
receipt of weatherstripping material, and the like (not
20 shown). The extrusion 10 shown in Figure 1 also has on
the upper portion thereof a substantially L-shaped surface
24, having a lower ledge 26 and at right angles thereto a
vertical edge 28. When assembled into a window sash, the
extrusion 10 is cut into four desired lengths, having each
25 end of each section mitered at an appropriate angle. The
mitered edges are then thermally welded in a manner well
known to those of ordinary skill in the art so as to form
a complete sash frame. Extrusion 10 of the present
invention advantageously presents a cross-section at each
30 miter joint having a substantially continuous surface of
thermoplastic material. Thus, the entire cross-sectional
surface area available for thermal welding is
substantially greater than that of a continuous lineal
extrusion being substantially hollow in profile. In
35 addition, it is relatively easy to align adjacent members

0 of the sash because of the large surface area available for welding.

In the context of a complete sash structure, the lower edge 26 of the extrusion 10 is well adapted to receive edges of glass panes (not shown) in a moveable or
5 fixed sash. Vertical edge 28 provides a support surface for a rearward pane member of, for example, a double-pane sash. The extrusion 10 is also provided on a forward edge thereof with a bead pocket, generally indicated at
10 reference numeral 30, for receipt of a bead (not shown) for retaining an outer pane of a double pane window sash. Thus, the completed sash defines an exterior surface 32 for the sash and an interior surface 34. In this embodiment, the exterior surface 32 is exposed to weathering, while the interior surface 34 [extending from
15 the vertical edge 28 around the rear (hidden in Figure 1) surface of the thermoplastic cap 20] is exposed to the interior of a home or the like. The thermoplastic cap 20 may therefore be preferably provided with the interior surface 34 being extruded from a thermoplastic polymer
20 that is highly paintable, whereas the exterior surface 32 is extruded with a thermoplastic polymer that is highly weatherable.

Figure 2 illustrates a die assembly 40 consisting of a series of individual die plates, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54,
25 56, and 58, for manufacturing the multi-component extrusion 10 shown in Figure 1. The manner of use of such dies is well known to those of ordinary skill in the thermoplastic extrusion art and is well described in United States Patent Application Serial No. 09/452,906,
30 entitled "Wood Fiber Polymer Composite Extrusion and Method" assigned to the assignee of the present invention. Disclosure of that application is incorporated herein by reference. Nevertheless, it is sufficient to state that the die assembly 40 shown in Figure 2 is intended for use
35 with a plurality of conventional extruders, such as conventional twin screw extruders, each of which includes

0 a hopper or mixer for accepting a feed stock consisting of
a thermoplastic polymer and/or wood composite pelletized
material, a conduit for connecting the hopper with a
preheater for controlling the temperature of an admixture
5 for introducing foaming agents in the case of a foamed
component. The preheater is fluidly connected to a multi-
screw chamber for admixing feedstock with the foaming
agent (if present) and other conditioners to be described
hereinbelow under controlled conditions of temperature and
10 pressure. The multi-screw chamber of each extruder is
connected to an appropriate one of the die assembly plates
shown in Figure 2 for producing the multi-component
extrusion 10 shown in Figure 1. The extrudate is then
preferably calibrated in a conventional calibrator to
15 result in a final product shown in Figure 1. Appropriate
extruding machines are available from Cincinnati Millacron
Corporation, Batavia, Ohio, USA.

As best seen in Figure 2, one of the hereinabove
described extruders (not shown) is fluidly connected to an
20 introductory plate 44 for introduction of a primary
extrudate which will become the hollow high density
component 12 shown in Figure 1. The primary extrudate is
introduced through a primary aperture 60 in the
introductory plate 44. A first shaping plate 46 has a
25 plurality of internal conduits 47 for directing the flow
of the primary extrudate to corresponding conduits in a
secondary extrudate die plate 48. Secondary extrudate die
plate 48 has an inlet 49 for introduction of a secondary
extrudate which will become the second, low density foamed
30 thermoplastic component 16 of the extrusion shown in
Figure 1. The inlet 49 is fluidly connected to a
secondary shaping die plate 50 by way of an internal
secondary conduit 51. Both the internal primary and
secondary conduits 47, 51 are in fluid communication with
35 a mandrel plate 52 which supports a first mandrel 53(a) by
means of a plurality of longitudinally elongated fins

0 53(b) within the internal primary conduit 47. An
external surface 53(c) of the first mandrel 53(a) is the
inner forming surface for the primary extrudate. As best
seen in Figures 3 & 4(a)- 4(c), the first mandrel 53(a) is
substantially hollow and has suspended therein a second
5 mandrel 53(d). The second mandrel 53(d) is suspended
within the hollow interior of the first mandrel 53(a) by
elongated, longitudinally tapering fins 53(e). Thus, the
first and second mandrels 53(a) and 53(d) form a two-stage
floating mandrel within the internal primary conduit 47.
10 The secondary extrudate which will ultimately comprise the
second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16 of
the multi-component extrusion 10 of Figure 1 enters the
die assembly 40 of Figure 2 through the secondary
extrudate inlet 49, the internal secondary conduit 51, and
15 then the voids formed between the first and second
mandrels. A mandrel shaping plate 54 is positioned
adjacent to the mandrel plate 52 and is in fluid
communication therewith for further shaping the principal
extrudate about the external surface 53(c) of the first
20 mandrel 53(a). The tapering fins 53(e) taper in thickness
from the maximum thickness shown in Figure 4b to a thin
edge (hidden from view) approximately one-quarter of the
length of the first and second mandrels in a manner well
known to those of ordinary skill in the art so that at the
25 exit end of the first and second mandrels the fins end and
are absent from the void 55. The die assembly 40 further
includes first and second capstocking dies 56, 58, having
corresponding first and second internal channels 57, 59
for introduction of a third extrudate in the form of a
30 capstock from a third extruder (not shown) through
capstocking inlet 62 in first capstock die 56, as best
seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5 is a schematic representation of extrudate
flow through die assembly 40, illustrating flow of the
35 primary extrudate 64, the secondary extrudate 66, and the
third extrudate 68. As stated above, the primary

extrudate forms the thin wall, high density, hollow component 12; the secondary extrudate forms the second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16; and the third extrudate forms the thermoplastic cap 20 of the extrusion 10 shown in Figure 1.

Table 1 hereinbelow illustrates one preferred formulation used for the principal extrudate used in the production of the thin wall, high density hollow component 12, shown in Figure 1. In this preferred embodiment, the thin wall, high density hollow component 12 consists of a polyvinyl chloride (PVC)/wood flour composite. The inclusion of wood flour is preferred, but nevertheless is optional.

TABLE 1
PVC/Wood Flour Composite

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|------------|------------------|
| PVC resin | 50.25 | Shintech | Freeport | Texas |
| Stabilizer | 0.75 | Witco | Taft | Louisiana |
| Plasticizer | 1.51 | Kalama | Kalama | Washington |
| Process Aid TR-060 | 1.96 | Struktol | Stow | Ohio |
| Lubricant PCS-351E | 0.50 | Morton | Cincinnati | Ohio |
| Modifier B-360 | 5.03 | GE | Morgantown | West Virginia |
| Wood Flour (60 Mesh Pine) | 40.00 | American Wood Fiber | Schofield | Wisconsin |

The secondary extrudate 66 which forms the second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16 in the preferred embodiment shown in Figure 1 consists of a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) foamed core. Table II

0 illustrates one preferred formulation of the secondary extrudate 66.

TABLE II
PVC Foam Core

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| INGREDIENT | PERCENT | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| PVC resin SE 650 | 77.97 | Shintech | Freeport | Texas |
| Stablizer MK 1915 | 1.25 | Witco | Taft | Louisiana |
| Lubricant VGE-1875 | 1.55 | Cognis | Kanakee | Illinois |
| Calcium Stearate | 0.39 | Synpro | Cleveland | Ohio |
| Lubricant AC-629A | 0.12 | Cognis | Kanakee | Illinois |
| Modifier PA-40 | 4.68 | Kaneka | Pasadena | Texas |
| Titanium Dioxide | 0.78 | Huntsman Tioxide | Lake Charles | Louisiana |
| Filler UFT | 2.34 | OMYA | Florence | Vermont |
| Foaming Agent Hydrocerol | 9.36 | Clariant | Charlotte | North Carolina |
| Process Aid TR-060 | 1.56 | Struktol | Stow | Ohio |

A preferred formulation used for the third extrudate 68, forming the thermoplastic cap 20 in the multi-component extrusion 10 of Figure 1, is illustrated in Table III, wherein the thermoplastic has favorable weatherability characteristics.

TABLE III

PVC Cap

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| PVC Resin SE-650 | 76.161 | Shintech | Freeport | Texas |
| Stabilizer 401P | 0.610 | Witco | Taft | Louisiana |
| Lubricant VGE-3041 | 0.228 | PQ Corp. | Kansas City | Kansas |
| Anti-stat | 2.44 | Cognis | Kanakee | Illinois |
| Modifier K- 37 | 0.38 | Clariant | | Germany |
| Calcium Carbonate | 4.95 | Kaneka | Pasadena | Texas |
| TiO ₂ | 3.04 | OMYA | Florence | Vermont |
| Calcined Clay | 7.62 | Huntsman Tioxide | Lake Charles | Louisiana |
| | 4.57 | Burgess | Sanders- ville | Georgia |

Alternatively, thermoplastic component 20 may be provided by an alternate formulation of the third extrudate 68 in the form of a highly paintable thermoplastic cap 20. A preferred extrudate formulation is illustrated in Table IV, wherein the principal ingredients of that extrudate are Styrene Acrylonitrile (SAN) and Acrylic Styrene Acrylonitrile (ASA).

TABLE IV

ASA Cap

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|------------|---------|----------|------------|------------------|
| SAN B-578 | 69.125 | GE | Morgantown | West Virginia |
| ASA B-984 | 29.625 | GE | Morgantown | West Virginia |

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|---------------------|---------|----------|------------|------------------|
| EBS Advawax 280 | 0.50 | Morton | Cincinnati | Ohio |
| Calcium Stearate | 0.50 | Synpro | Cleveland | Ohio |
| UV Absorber | 0.25 | GE | Morgantown | West Virginia |

An alternate embodiment of the multi-composite polymer/wood fiber extrusion 10' is shown in Figure 6. This alternate embodiment employs a first thin wall, high density, hollow component 12, substantially identical to the corresponding component of Figure 1. In addition, a second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16 is employed which is also identical to that shown in Figure 1, with a corresponding reference numeral. However, the extrusion 10' of Figure 6 has a first component 12, having a slightly different shape in profile, including an intermediate web portion 80, dividing the interior cavity 14 shown in Figure 1 into twin cavities in which the second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16 resides. The alternate embodiment 10' also includes a thermoplastic cap 20 identical to that shown with respect to the first embodiment 10 shown in Figure 1. However, the alternate embodiment 10' is provided with a further, low density foamed thermoplastic component 82, intermediate the thermoplastic cap 20 and the exterior surface 18 of the thin wall, high density component 12. The further, low density foamed component 82 may be formed from an extrudate having a composition identical to the second, low density foamed thermoplastic component 16, as shown in Table II hereinabove.

The alternate embodiment 10' of the multi-component extrusion shown in Figure 6 is manufactured utilizing a modified form of the die assembly 40 shown in Figure 2. In this alternate embodiment, the mandrel plate 52 is replaced with an alternate mandrel plate design 52', shown

0 in Figures 7a and 7b. In this alternate embodiment, the
 first mandrel 53(a)' is provided with a first section 84
 and a second section 86, interconnected by a fin 88. Each
 of the sections includes an outer, hollow mandrel 90 and
 an inner, floating mandrel 92, having a solid cross-
 5 section. Each of the mandrels is supported by a plurality
 of fins, shown with respect to the first embodiment. In
 addition, the alternate embodiment of the mandrel plate
 52' is provided with a tertiary extrudate inlet 94, which
 is in fluid communication with an internal tertiary
 10 conduit 96 for introduction of a tertiary extrudate which
 will result in the further, low density foamed component
 82, shown in Figure 6. The tertiary extrudate may have
 the same formulation as shown in Table II with respect to
 the secondary extrudate 66 and second, low density foamed
 15 thermoplastic component 16 of the first embodiment 10.

Further alternate embodiments of the invention are
 contemplated. By way of example and not limitation, the
 capstock material 20 of alternate embodiment 10' may be
 eliminated, and the tertiary extrudate which forms the
 20 further, low density foamed component 82 may be replaced
 with a formulation having a significant wood flour
 component and improved paintability characteristics
 resulting from the formulation illustrated in Table V,
 below, in which the principal thermoplastic component is
 25 Styrene Acrylonitrile (SAN) polymer resin.

TABLE V
 SAN/Wood Flour Foamed Composite

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT (by weight) | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| SAN Resin | 70-90 | Kumho | | South Korea |
| Wood Flour | 5-25 | American Wood Fiber | Schofield | Wisconsin |

| INGREDIENT | PERCENT (by weight) | SUPPLIER | CITY | STATE |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|
| ABS Modifier | 2-8 | GE | Morgantown | West Virginia |
| Lubricant | 0.1-0.5 | Synpro | Cleveland | Ohio |
| Foaming Agent | | Color | | |
| 80-428-1 | 0.5-3.0 | Matrix | Cleveland | Ohio |

In each of the above-described embodiments, all of the components exit the second capstocking die plate 58 in a molten (i.e. plastic) state and are introduced into a calibration unit (not shown) where the extrudate is cooled to shape. The resulting multi-component extrusion is preferably cooled further in a conventional cooling tank. Subsequent thereto the resulting extrudate enters a puller before it is cut to length by a saw subsequent to assembly into a window frame or the like.

The above described methods and apparatus are also applicable for the production of decking and siding. By way of example, a third, alternate embodiment of the invention is generally indicated at reference numeral 10'' in Figure 9. This embodiment employs a component structure substantially identical with respect to the second embodiment 10' shown in Figure 6 where like reference numerals refer to like structure. As will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art, appropriate materials can be selected from those shown in Tables I through V above to achieve the desired macroscopic mechanical properties and weather resistance of the resulting multi-component extrusion 10''. Similarly, a decking material can be provided in the form shown with respect to the first preferred embodiment 10, shown in Figure 1. In this alternate embodiment the cross-sectional shape of the extrusion is substantially identical to decking in the form of standard dimensional

0 lumber wherein the multi-component composite decking
extrusion has a foam composite core shown at reference
numeral 16 in Figure 1, surrounded by a composite shell
core corresponding to reference numeral 12 of Figure 1,
and a cap corresponding to reference numeral 20 in Figure
5 1.

 In view of the above, the invention is not to be
limited by the above disclosure but is to be determined in
scope by the claims which follow.

0

CLAIMS

I claim:

5

1. A multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion suitable for use in the fenestration, decking and remodeling industries, comprising:

10

a first, high density composite member consisting of a thermoplastic component and a cellulosic fiber component extruded from a primary extruder into an extrusion die, wherein the first member has inner and outer sidewalls defining a high density, thin wall extrusion having at least one enclosed, hollow interior compartment; and,

15

a second, low density foamed member consisting of a foamed thermoplastic polymer, coextruded with the first member in a molten state from a secondary extruder into the extrusion die so as to be laterally coextensive with and molecularly bonded to one of the sidewalls of the first member.

20

2. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion of Claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic component of the first high density member has polyvinyl chloride as a principle component by weight.

25

3. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion of Claim 1, wherein the foamed thermoplastic component of the second member has a substantial cellulosic fiber content.

30

4. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion of Claim 3, wherein the foamed thermoplastic component has polyvinyl chloride as a principle component by weight.

35

5. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous extrusion of Claim 3, wherein the foamed thermoplastic

0 component has styrene acrylonitrile as a principle
component by weight.

6. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
extrusion of Claim 1, wherein the second member is
5 laterally adjacent to, and longitudinally coextensive with
the inner sidewall of the first high density member.

7. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
extrusion of Claim 1, wherein the second member is
10 laterally adjacent to and longitudinally coextensive with
the outer sidewall of the first high density member.

8. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
extrusion of Claim 1, wherein the second member is
15 laterally adjacent to and longitudinally coextensive with
both the inner and outer sidewalls of the first high
density member.

9. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
20 extrusion of Claim 1, including a third member consisting
of a thermoplastic cap laterally adjacent to and
coextensive with a laterally outermost one of the first
and second members of the multi-component extrusion,
wherein the thermoplastic cap is coextruded from a
25 tertiary extruder into the extrusion die substantially
simultaneously with the first and second members so as to
be molecularly bonded with the laterally outermost member.

30 10. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
extrusion of Claim 9, wherein the extrusion defines left
hand and right hand sides, and wherein the thermoplastic
cap has a highly weatherable thermoplastic polymer on the
left hand side and a highly paintable thermoplastic
35 polymer on the right hand side.

0 11. The multi-component, longitudinally continuous
extrusion of Claim 10, wherein the highly weatherable
thermoplastic polymer has polyvinyl chloride as a
principle component by weight, and wherein the highly
paintable thermoplastic polymer has acrylic styrene
5 acrylonitrile (ASA) as a principle component by weight.

 12. A multi-plate extrusion die of the type having
a plurality of die plates sequentially positioned so as to
define upstream and downstream directions, comprising:

10 an introductory plate generally defining a primary
aperture for passage therethrough of a primary extrudate,
the primary aperture extending longitudinally through
substantially each die plate of the extrusion die;

 a mandrel plate downstream of the introductory plate
15 and fluidly connected thereto for receipt of the primary
extrudate and a secondary extrudate, having a first
elongated mandrel substantially suspended therein by first
support means for supporting the first mandrel in a spaced
apart relationship within the primary aperture, wherein
20 the first mandrel is substantially hollow and has a second
mandrel substantially suspended therein by second support
means for supporting the second mandrel in a spaced apart
relationship within the first mandrel so as to form an
elongated hollow, interstitial void between the first and
25 second mandrels; and,

 a secondary plate positioned between the introductory
and mandrel plates having means for introducing the second
extrudate into the interstitial void, whereby an elongated
final extrudate having at least two different
30 longitudinally continuous, molecularly bonded
thermoplastic components can exit the mandrel plate.

 13. The multi-plate extrusion die of Claim 12,
including a capstock plate, positioned downstream of the
35 mandrel plate, for adding a third extrudate in the form of
a capstock to the final extrudate.

0 14. The multi-plate extrusion die of Claim 12,
wherein the first and second support means are elongated,
tapered fins having a decreasing thickness from the
upstream direction to the downstream direction.

5 15. A method of making a multi-component,
longitudinally continuous extrusion suitable for use in
the fenestration, decking and remodeling industries with
a multi-plate extrusion die of the type having a plurality
of die plates sequentially positioned so as to define
10 upstream and downstream directions, comprising the steps
of:

 preparing a thermoplastic primary extrudate and a
thermoplastic secondary extrudate;

 introducing the primary extrudate in a molten state
15 into an introductory plate generally defining a primary
aperture for passage therethrough of the primary
extrudate, wherein the primary aperture extends
longitudinally through substantially each die plate of the
extrusion die;

20 positioning a mandrel plate downstream of and fluidly
connected to the introductory plate, wherein the mandrel
plate has a first elongated mandrel suspended in a spaced
apart relationship within the primary aperture and wherein
the first mandrel is substantially hollow and has a second
25 mandrel substantially suspended therein in a spaced apart
relationship within the first mandrel so as to form an
elongated, hollow, interstitial void between the first and
second mandrels; and,

 introducing the secondary extrudate in a molten state
30 into the interstitial void, whereby an elongated final
extrudate having at least two different longitudinally
continuous, molecularly bonded thermoplastic components
exit the mandrel plate.

35 16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the first
extrudate is prepared so as to substantially consist of a

0 thermoplastic component and a cellulosic fiber component,
and wherein the second extrudate is prepared so as to
substantially consist of a foamed thermoplastic polymer.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the second
5 extrudate includes a substantial cellulosic component.

18. The method of Claim 15, including the step of
providing a third thermoplastic capstock extrudate,
positioning a capstock plate downstream of the mandrel
10 plate, introducing the third extrudate in a molten state
to an exterior surface of the final extrudate so as to
form a cap.

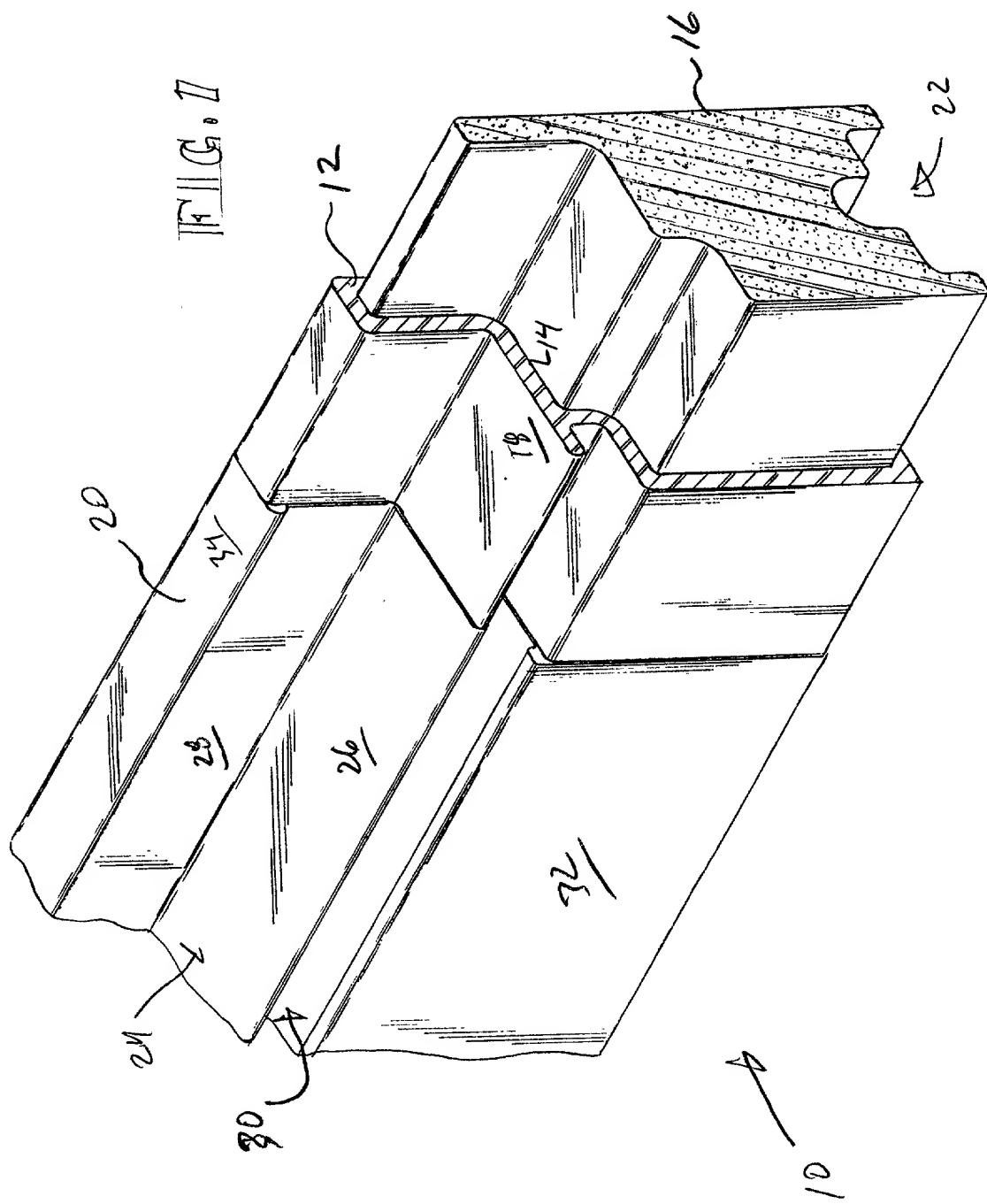
19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the final
15 extrudate defines left hand and right hand sides,
including the steps of simultaneously applying two
different types of thermoplastic capstocks to the final
extrusion, one of the thermoplastic capstock materials
consisting of a highly weatherable thermoplastic polymer
20 on the left hand side and another of the thermoplastic
capstock materials consisting of a highly paintable
thermoplastic polymer on the right hand side.

0

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A multi-component composite extrusion includes various combinations of a hollow, high density profile filled in with a foamed, thermoplastic core. A further low density foamed profile can alternately surround the high density, hollow component. A capstock can be provided on either embodiment of the multi-component extrusion. All of the components are preferably substantially simultaneously extruded in a single multi-plate extrusion die, so that the various components are substantially laterally coextensive with one another and molecularly bonded to the adjacent component. The thin wall, high density component and the adjacent low density foamed thermoplastic component may optionally be provided with substantial wood fiber content to alter the macroscopic properties of the resulting multi-component extrusion. The extrusion has utility in the fenestration, decking, and remodeling industries. The method disclosed for making the extrusion permits the extrusion designer to vary the type of thermoplastic material used with respect to each component and the presence or absence of wood fiber in the components to vary the macroscopic properties of the entire composite extrusion, surface characteristics of the extrusion, and weatherability of the extrusion.

25



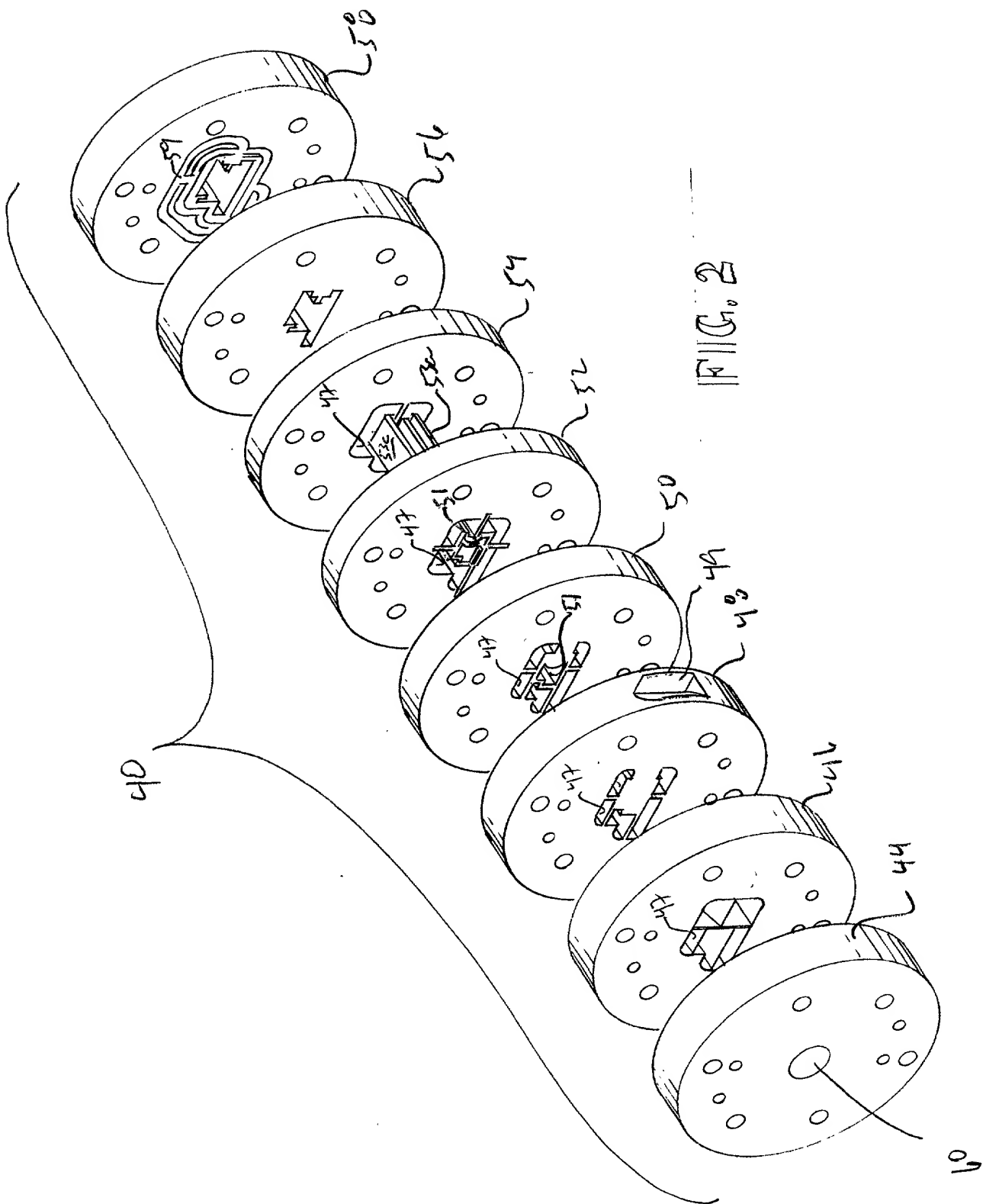


FIG. 2

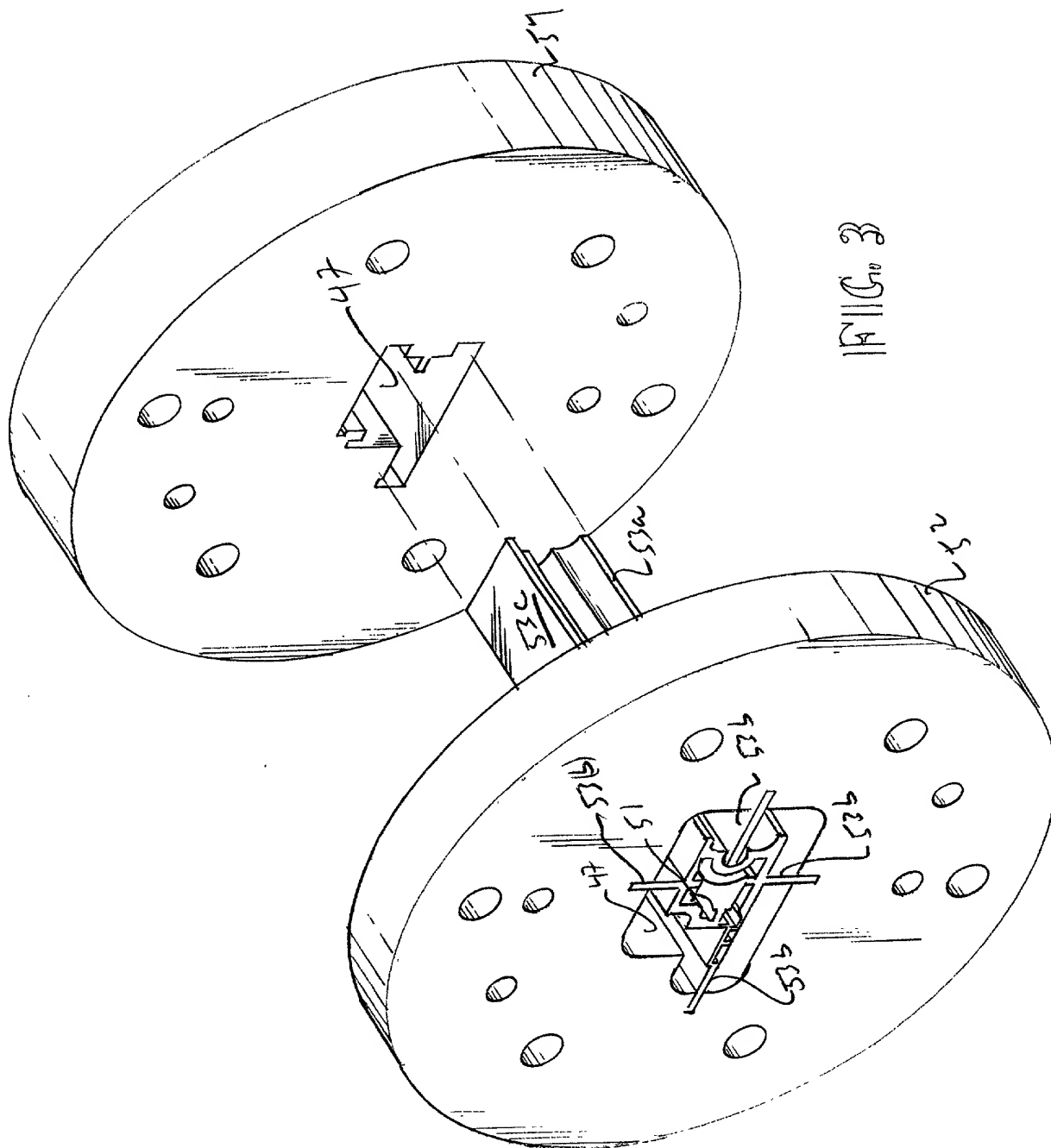


FIG. 3

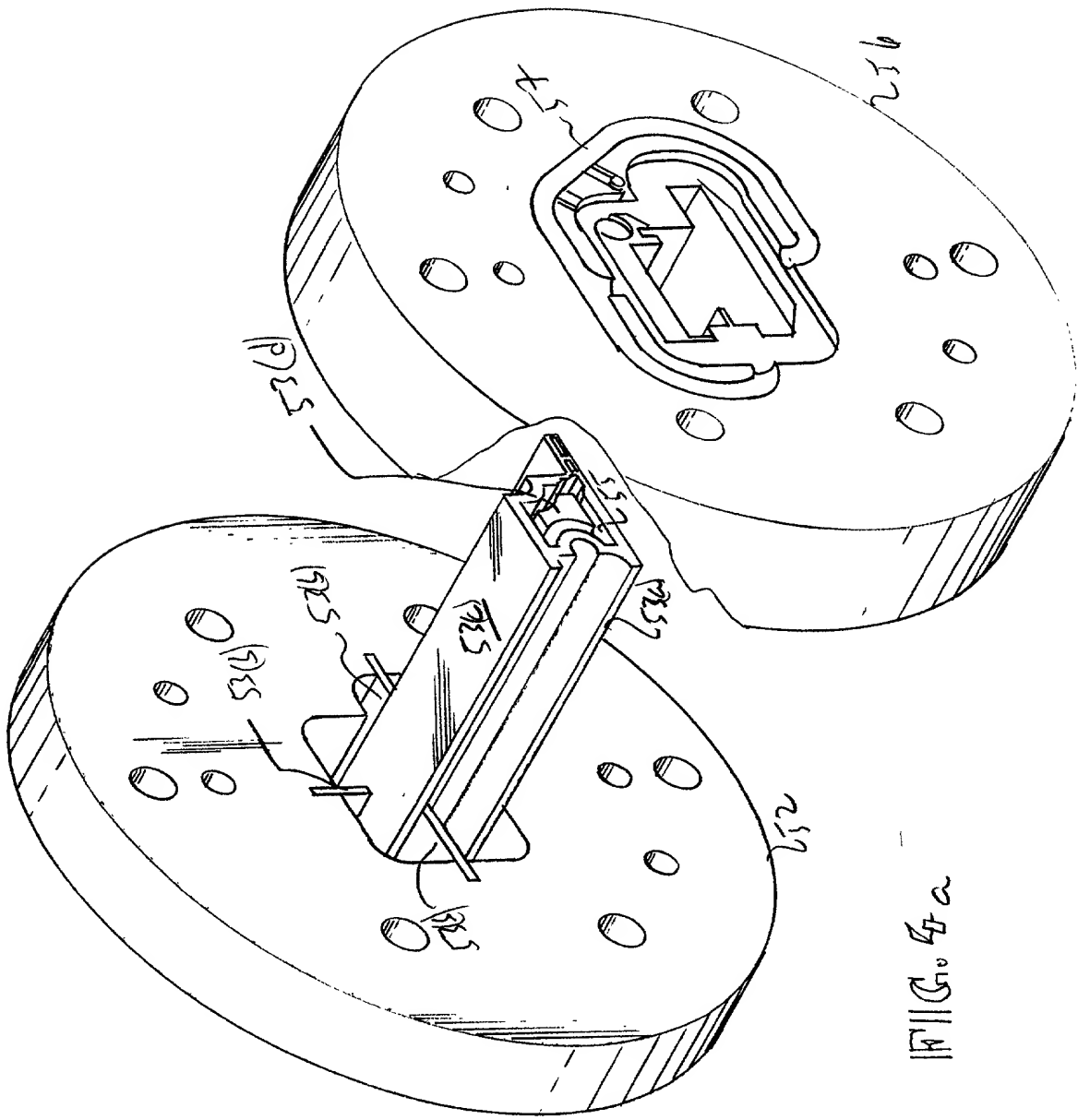
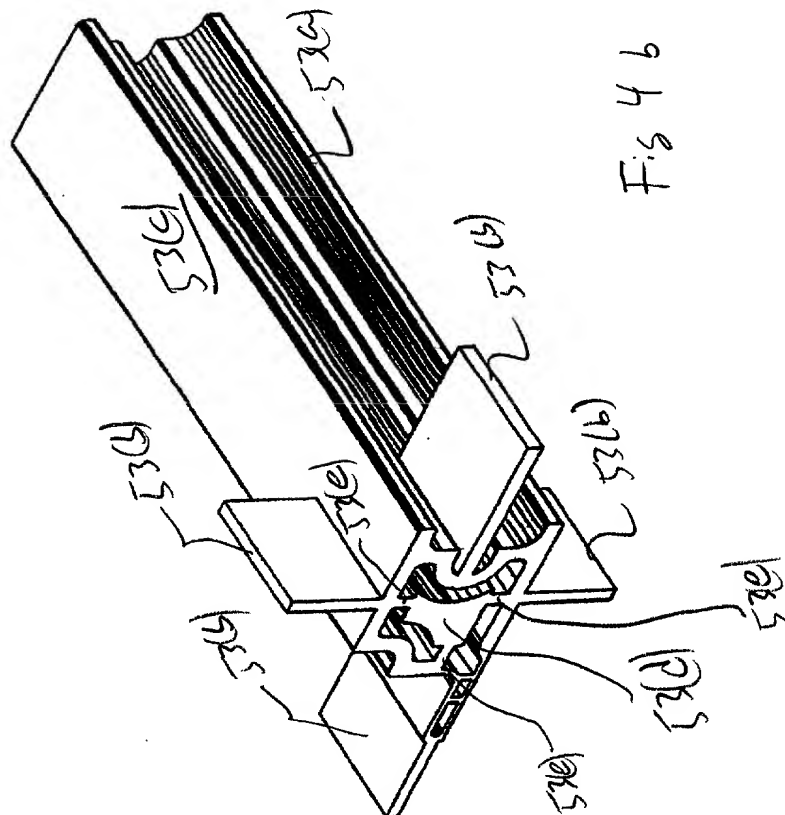
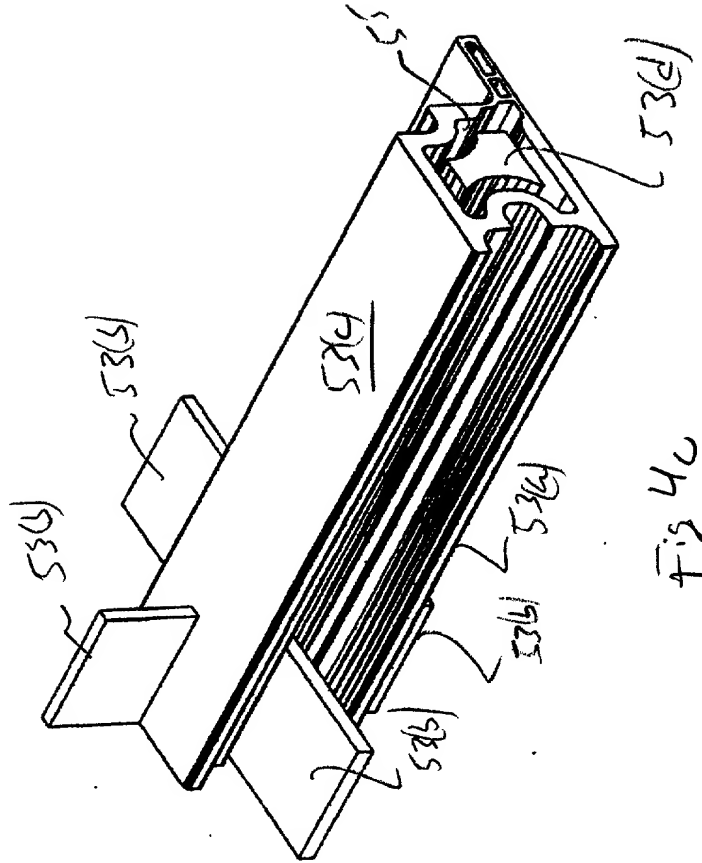
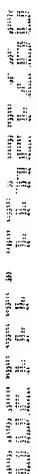


FIG. 4a

[illegible]

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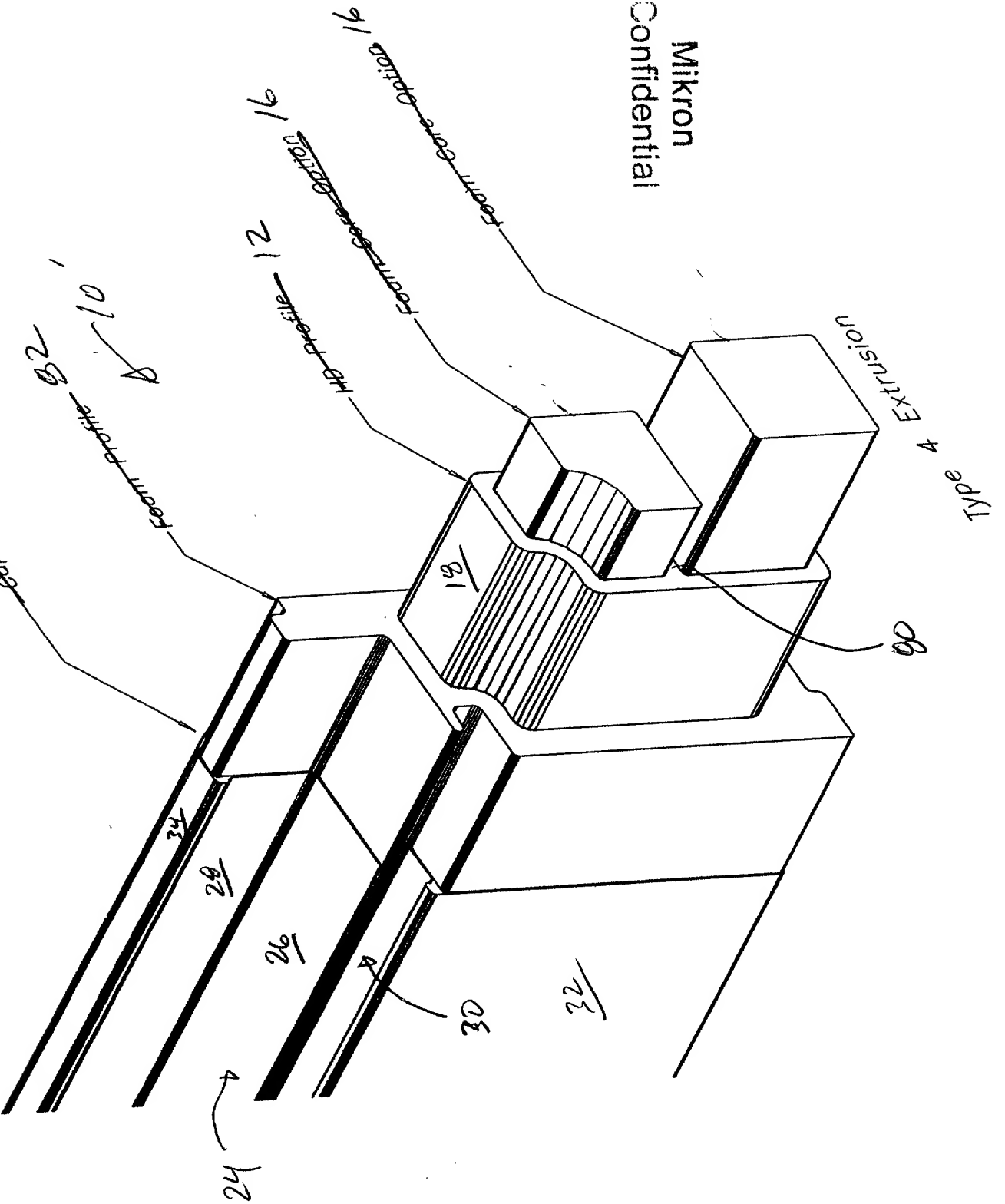
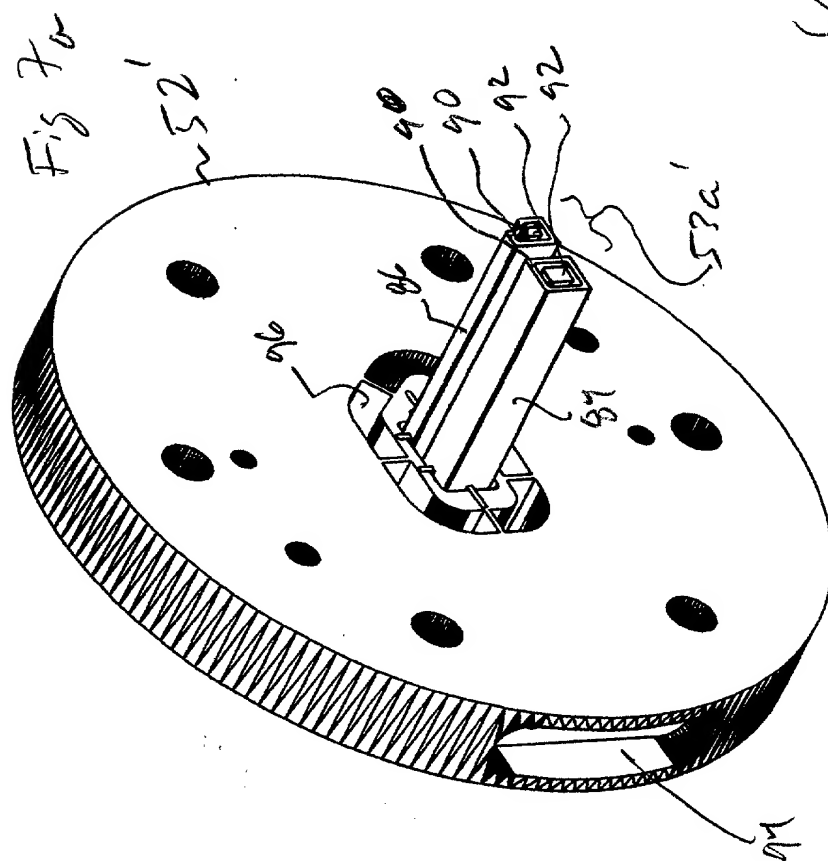
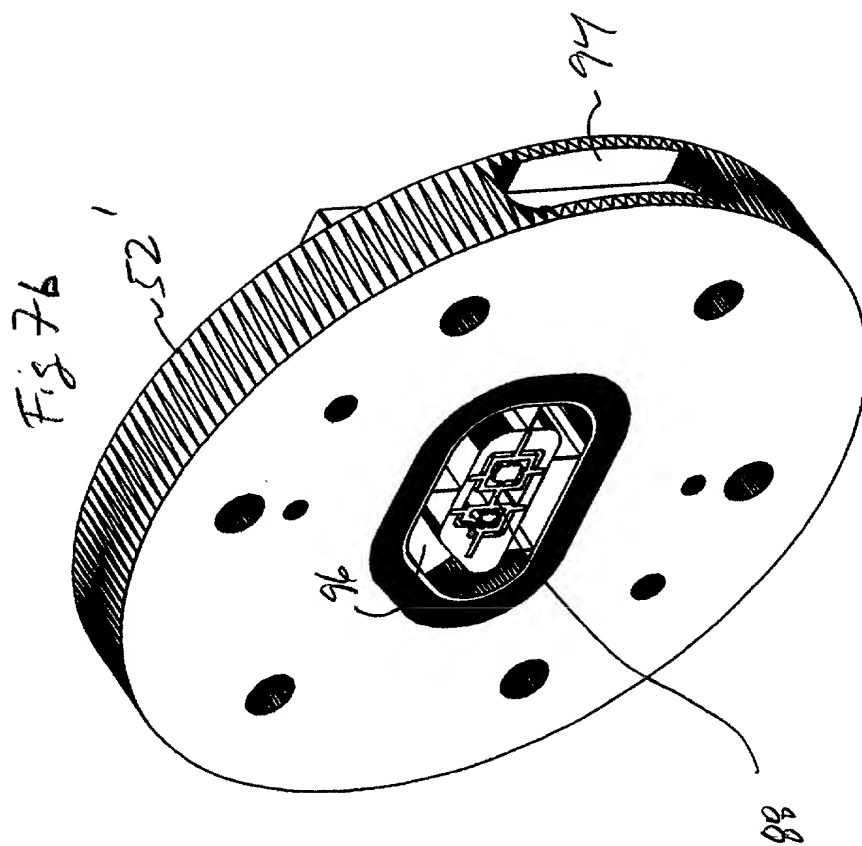
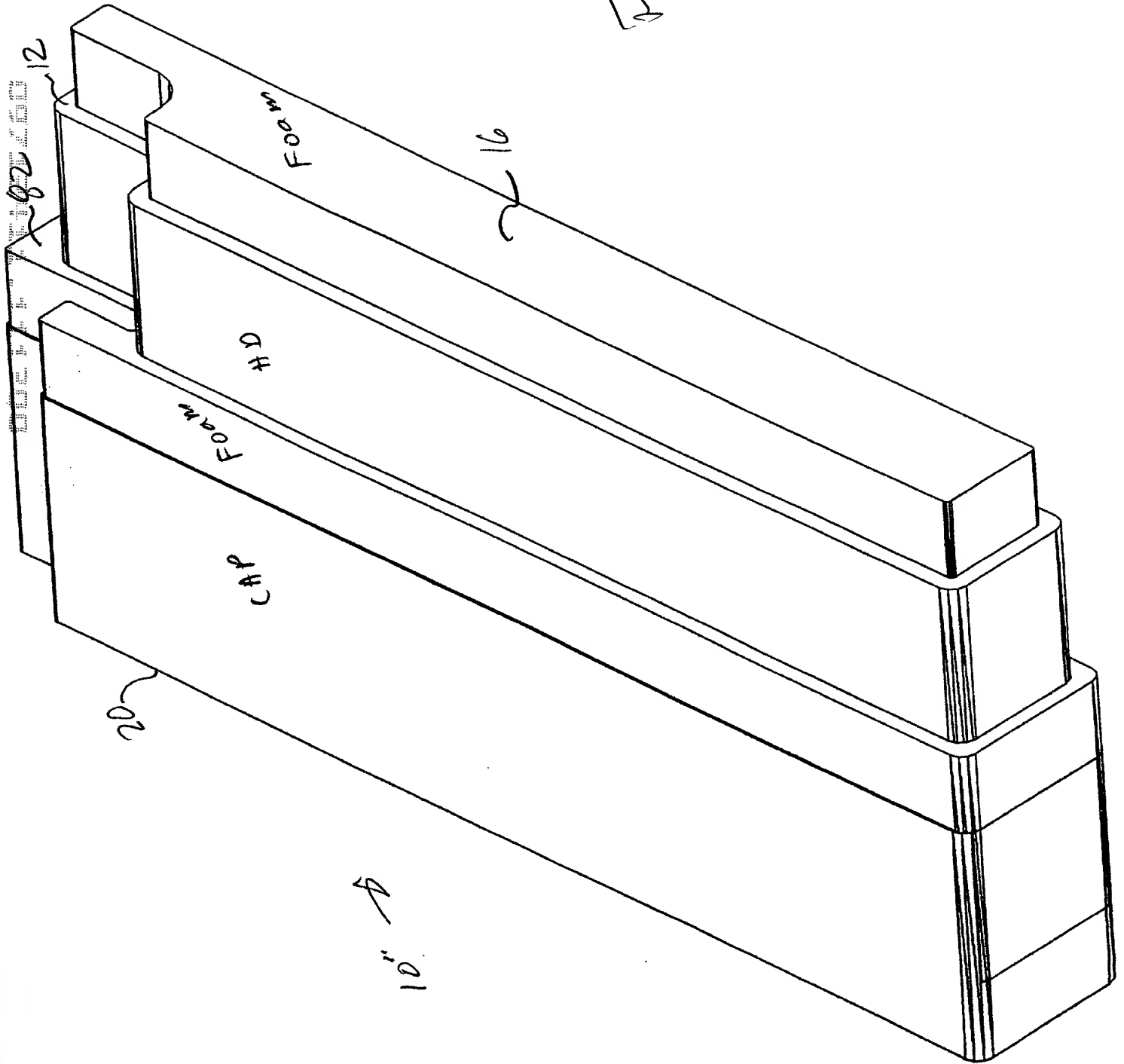


Fig 6



~~S PLATE WITH INSERT~~
~~Foam Introduction~~

Fig 9



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As the below-named inventor, I declare that:

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below under my name.

I have reviewed and understand the contents of the foregoing specification, including the claims, and I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor of the invention entitled "MULTI-COMPONENT COEXTRUSION," which is described and claimed in the foregoing specification.

I acknowledge my duty to disclose information of which I am aware which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(a).

I hereby appoint MICHAEL J. FOLISE, Registration No. 31,952 and H. ALBERT RICHARDSON Registration No. 27,701, composing the firm of RICHARDSON & FOLISE, 1200 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1801, Seattle, Washington, 98101, my attorneys to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. Please direct all telephone calls to Michael J. Folise at (206) 682-1600 and telecopies to (206) 682-3985.

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further, that these statements were made with the knowledge that the making of willfully false statements and the like is punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and may jeopardize the validity of any patent issuing from this patent application.



George Melkonian

Date 10/23/00

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